

REMARKS

As a preliminary matter, Applicants request acknowledgement of the claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. 119 on the basis of the filing of a certified copy of the priority document (JP 2003-039597).

As a further preliminary matter, Applicants appreciate the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter contained in claims 2-5 and 10-12.

Claims 1, 6-9, and 13-17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Boyer (U.S. Patent No. 7,055,081) in view of Ichihara (U.S. Patent No. 7,031,090). In response, Applicants amended independent claims 1 and 9 to incorporate the allowable subject matter of claims 2 and 10, respectively. Claim 17 is amended to incorporate the subject matter of claim 18, which corresponds to the allowable subject matter of claim 5. Claim 17 is further amended to define the term "a posteriori decoding" to the term "likelihood decoding" and provide consistent claim language when incorporating claim 18 into claim 17. Support for this amendment can be found on page 20, line 11 to page 21, line 11 of Applicants' specification.

Claims 5 and 13 are rewritten in independent form to include the subject matter of claims 1 and 9, respectively. Claim 5 was acknowledged by the Examiner as containing allowable subject matter. Claim 13 includes similar subject matter, and therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 13 should be allowed, which is respectfully requested.

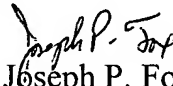
Similar to claim 17, claims 5 and 13 are further amended to amend the term “a posteriori decoding” to “likelihood decoding” to provide claim consistency. Support for the amendments can be found on page 20, line 11 to page 21, line 11 of Applicants’ specification.

New claims 21-24 are added, and are similar to claims 7-8, but ultimately depend from amended claims 5 and 13, respectively. Applicants earnestly solicit allowance of new claims 21-24 for at least the reasons recited above.

For all of the foregoing reasons, Applicants submit that this Application is in condition for allowance, which is respectfully requested. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney if an interview would expedite prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

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